

Adams County Local Emergency Planning Committee

Promoting Chemical Safety in the Hastings/Adams County Area

1/10/03

Rebecca Kane
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Environment and Compliance Assurance
Mail Code 2222A
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20460

Dear Madam:

We have visited and reviewed the pilot ECHO site and wish to express our strong opposition to the creation of this information source. As members of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) of Adams County, Nebraska, we are charged with the responsibility of planning and preparing for local chemical emergencies. Consequently, given the universal concern for Homeland Security, we consider this web site - along with the links to EPA's Envirofacts Data Warehouse and the Right to Know Network - to be troublesome as it provides packaged planning for anyone wishing to cause harm to a community or its environment. Specifically, the site lists detailed information including hazardous chemical identities, quantities and even offers street maps to storage locations.

We recognize that the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act is intended to allow concerned citizens an avenue to inform themselves about chemicals to which they may be exposed in their daily living. We also appreciate that public access to such information helps ensure that local business and industry are responsible stewards of the environment and do not endanger community health through use, handling and storage of hazardous chemicals. Unfortunately, we believe that the ECHO web site presents more of a risk than a benefit to a community by the nature of its uncontrolled and unmonitored free access to potentially deadly information.

As an alternative, we suggest that a registration process be established to gain access to this site. This would provide law-abiding citizens and companies, with valid reasons, the ability to gain entry to the site. At the same time, registration could be a deterrent and possible means of detection for those wishing access for ulterior motives.

**C/o Adams County Emergency Management Agency
1313 North Hastings Avenue
Hastings, Nebraska 68901**

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If you have any questions or concerns about the opinions expressed herewith, please feel free to contact either Loren Uden, Adams County Emergency Manager, at 402-461-2360 or me at 402-462-4141.

Sincerely,



Rick Rail
Adams County LEPC

Copies to:

Tom Ridge, Governor
Chuck Hagel, U.S. Senator
Ben Nelson, U.S. Senator
Tom Osborne, U.S. House of Representatives
James B. Gulliford, Administrator, Region 7 EPA
Dave Heineman, Lieutenant Governor of Nebraska
Harlan Schafer, Chairman, Nebraska SERC

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